

mountains, which recede considerably, and descend upon it in low rounded buff slopes or downs, over which the track, keeping near the water, lies. There was not a green thing, not a bush, or house, or flock of sheep, or horseman, or foot passenger along the miles of road which were visible from that point. The water lay in the mocking beauty of its brilliant colouring, a sea without a shore, without a boat, without a ripple or flash of foam, lifeless utterly, dead from all time past to all time to come. Dead, too, it is on closer acquaintance, and its odour, which can be discerned three miles off, is that odour of corruption known to science as sulphuretted hydrogen. Now and then there is a shore, a shallow bay or inlet, in which the lake, driven by the east wind, evaporates, leaving behind it a glaring crust of salt, beyond which a thick, bubbly, blackish-green scum lies on the blue water. In such places only the expressive old-fashioned word *stench* can describe the odour, which was strong enough nearly to knock over the servants and *charvadars*. No description can give an idea of the effluvium which is met with here and there beside this great salt lake, which has a length of eighty miles and an average breadth of twenty-four.

A few miles from Dissa the lake-water is brought into tanks and evaporated, and many donkeys were being loaded with the product, which, like all salt which is sold in Persia, is impure, and for European use always requires

a domestic and tedious process of purification.

After a solitude of several miles villages appear, lying off the road in folds of the hills, which gradually recede so far as to leave a plain some miles broad and very fertile. At the end of an eleven hours' march we reached the important village of Dissa, with large houses and orchards, abundant water, a detachment of soldiers as a garrison, a resident proprietor's house, to which in his